

REMARKS

This Amendment is in response to the final office action dated April 6, 2004. This response is being submitted within two months from the mailing date of the final office action. Accordingly, Applicant solicits an advisory communication from the Examiner in the event any outstanding issues remain.

Claims 1, 2 and 4-34 are pending, of which Claims 27-30 are withdrawn, while Claims 1, 2, 4-26, and 31-34 presently stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly unpatentable over Rowe (U.S. Patent No. 6,394,907). Without acquiescence in the grounds of rejection or prejudice to pursue at a later time, and in the interest of expediting examination of this application, it is requested that Claims 1-2, 4-12, 19-26 and 31-34 be canceled, and new Claims 35-40 be added in their stead.

The following remarks focus on independent Claim 13 (from which remaining Claims 14-18 depend). The rejection based on the Rowe '907 patent first appeared in the Final Office Action, and Applicants have not previously had a chance to respond to this patent. For simplicity, these remarks are focused on a limited portion of Claim 13. This claim is generally directed to a method for "on-line or off-line validation of gaming pay-out vouchers dispensed from electronic gaming machines," and includes certain steps involving the use of a "wireless, portable computer device."

In the technique described in the Rowe '907 patent, a cashless instrument transaction clearinghouse is utilized to validate cashless instruments. If a record of the cashless instrument is not found, the transaction is rejected. (See Rowe '907 at, e.g., cols. 16:42-53, 17:26-46, 18:20-30) Thus, if the cashless instrument transaction clearinghouse is unexpectedly off-line or otherwise unavailable, validation of cashless instruments would presumably be impossible.

In contrast, Claim 13 provides that, if a voucher record cannot be retrieved, a "voucher record unavailable indication" is transmitted from the central network computer to said wireless, portable computer device, which displays a message in response thereto. Claim 13, as amended, further provides that a "voucher amount" is received via a user interface of the wireless, remote computer device, which "transmit[s] said voucher amount and said voucher identification information, via

said wireless interface, to said central network computer from said wireless, portable computer device." In addition, Claim 13 further recites the step of "preparing a voucher database reconciliation record at said central network computer for updating said voucher database at a subsequent time to reflect that the pay-out voucher has been paid." Thus, Claim 13 provides a practical solution to a situation that Rowe '907 does not even contemplate.

An example of an embodiment relating to Claim 13 may be found, for example, at paragraphs 49-53 of the Specification and, in particular paragraph 53 thereof, as well as Figs. 4 and 5.

While further differences are believed to exist between Rowe '907 and Claim 13, an explanation thereof is deemed unnecessary in view of the foregoing.

Claims 14-18 depend from Claim 13 and should be allowable for the same reasons.

New Claims 35-40 are system claims generally corresponding to pending method Claims 13-18. It is respectfully submitted that new Claims 35-40 should be allowable over the newly cited Rowe '907 patent for the same general reasons as Claims 13-18.

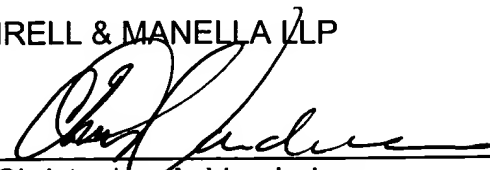
Request for Allowance

The Examiner is kindly requested to enter the Amendments presented herein. It is believed that the pending claims, as amended, are allowable over Rowe '907, and that the present application stands in condition for further examination. Final allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: June 7, 2004

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